

COUNCILLOR AND STAFF INTERACTION POLICY

Policy Number:	1.5
Approved by:	Chief Executive Officer
Date Approved:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	December 2026
Applicable to:	Councillors, Council staff and temporary employees, volunteers, contractors and consultants engaged by Council.
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Related Policies:	Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy Respect in the Workplace (Bullying, Harassment & Discrimination) Policy
Related Documents:	Model Councillor Code of Conduct Employee Code of Conduct
Statutory Reference:	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Local Government (Governance & Integrity) Regulations 2020</i> <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>

OVERVIEW

The Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy provides guidance and support for councillors and staff in the performance of their respective duties. The roles and responsibilities of councillors and staff are outlined in this policy.

The policy further supports transparent decision making and good governance arrangements, in conjunction with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and the standards of conduct provisions in the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) and the *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*.

The policy recognises the responsibilities of the Council in ensuring that it meets its obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* to protect people from risks to their health and safety including harassment, bullying, violence and discrimination.

THE POLICY

Background

The functions of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are defined in section 46 of the Act, including that the CEO is responsible for managing the interactions between council staff and councillors and ensuring that policies, practices and protocols that support arrangements for these interactions are in place.

Good governance and delivery of the Council Plan outcomes are dependent on how well the relationship between councillors and the organisation works, as well as an understanding and adherence to the roles and responsibilities of both staff and councillors.

This policy does not seek to prevent the interaction between councillors and staff in circumstances where:

1. contact between them is incidental (e.g. councillors visiting Council facilities, or when councillors and staff are attending Council, community and/or social events); and/or

2. contact outside of the Council workplace context, with councillors and staff acting as private citizens, rather than in their official Council capacity.

It is important that councillors are provided information from staff with appropriate seniority in the organisation. Councillors should raise Council business matters, regardless of how trivial they might seem, with the CEO or relevant General Manager.

Communication between Councillors and staff

The following sets out the expectations around clear and effective communication between councillors and staff:

1. All communications between councillors and staff must be courteous and respectful.
2. As a general rule, the CEO and Executive Assistant to the CEO are the first point of contact for councillors regarding Council business.
 - a. Councillors may contact the relevant General Manager to seek information or comment on a specific matter.
 - b. Requests for information are documented, and both the requests and responses will be distributed to the entire councillor group.
 - c. Councillors may also interact with nominated Council staff in accordance with the summary in **Table 1**.
3. The roles and responsibilities of councillors and council staff are outlined in **Table 2**.
4. Staff are to inform their line manager of any contact made to them by a councillor that they have not been directed to respond to.
5. Staff have the right to refuse contact from councillors outside their working hours unless that refusal is unreasonable.

Concerns

Staff should contact their direct manager and councillors should contact the Mayor or CEO with any concerns about the application of this policy.

This policy is approved by the Chief Executive Officer on 18 December 2025.



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DAVID MORCOM
Chief Executive Officer

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	November 2024	Not applicable.
1.2	December 2025	Date of Next Review updated to December 2026. Minor updates to position titles in Table 1.

TABLE 1: STAFF MEMBERS THAT COUNCILLORS MAY INTERACT WITH IN RELATION TO OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Subject matter	Appropriate staff member/s for Councillors to approach				
	Executive Assistant to the CEO	CEO	Relevant GM	Relevant Manager	Other
Routine Service Delivery and Projects	✓	✓	✓		✓ Customer Action Request
Council Plans, Budget and Policy Direction		✓	✓		
Media and communications		✓		✓ Manager Customer and Communications	
Governance		✓	✓ GM Corporate Services	✓ Manager Governance	✓ Governance Officer / Senior Governance & Reporting Officer/ Coordinator Governance & Strategy (Council meeting preparation, return of forms)
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	✓		✓ GM Corporate Services	✓ Chief Information Officer	✓ IT Helpdesk
Community and Council committees		✓	✓	✓ Manager Facilities & Emergencies	
Councillor Code of Conduct and other Councillor misconduct matters		✓	✓ GM Corporate Services		
Enforcement matters		✓	✓ GM Development GM Corporate Services	✓	
Land Use Planning		✓	✓ GM Development	✓ Manager Planning & Building	
Councillor Vehicles	✓				

TABLE 2: COUNCILLOR AND COUNCIL STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities
Councillor	<p>Treats all council staff with courtesy and respect.</p> <p>Acts in accordance with any policy, practice or protocol developed and implemented by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in accordance with section 46 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> (the Act) for managing interactions between members of staff and councillors.</p> <p>Recognises and supports the roles and responsibilities of staff and councillors.</p> <p>Maintains transparent decision making and compliance with the Act.</p> <p>Communicates with Executive Assistant to the CEO for administrative support.</p> <p>Directs queries relating to administrative management issues to the CEO and must raise matters about individual staff members with the CEO.</p> <p>Will be provided the opportunity of attending and playing an official role in a wide range of activities, including civic functions, throughout the Shire. Where an official role (speaking or otherwise) is available to councillors, the opportunity shall first be offered to the Mayor and then the Deputy Mayor. As part of the Mayor's ceremonial role, the Mayor should always take the lead role in hosting a civic function.</p>
Chief Executive Officer	<p>Encourages courteous and respectful communication between staff and councillors.</p> <p>Is responsible for the administrative management of Council, including the implementation of Council decisions and management of staff in accordance with section 46 of the Act.</p> <p>Ensures community requests raised through councillors are managed appropriately.</p> <p>Manages complaints from staff and councillors regarding their interactions.</p> <p>Maintains the Staff and Councillor Interaction Policy and promotes awareness of the policy across the organisation.</p>
General Managers and Business Unit Managers	<p>Treats all councillors with courtesy and respect.</p> <p>Models good practice and promotes awareness of this Policy with Council staff.</p> <p>Supports councillors to perform their role and duties as a councillor.</p> <p>Facilitates interactions between staff and councillors where required.</p> <p>Advises the CEO of any issues that arise in relation to staff and councillor interactions</p>
Council staff	<p>Treats all councillors with courtesy and respect.</p> <p>Interacts with councillors in accordance with this Policy.</p> <p>Informs their direct manager of any concerns they have regarding councillor contact.</p>